

## START OF THE CYCLING SEASON

# PHYSICAL PREPARATION TIPS

*With the cycling season just around the corner, it's important to know how to properly prepare for it. The Clinique Vélo Physio offered by Kinatex provides all the tools you need to successfully prepare for the cycling season.*

Cycling is an increasingly popular activity in Quebec. The sport is great for improving overall health, cardiovascular function, muscle strength and joint mobility. Cycling is also proven to offer benefits for certain forms of back pain caused by osteoarthritis.

What's more, because cycling is a dynamic sport, but with a low impact on the joints, it also offers benefits for people with osteoarthritis in the knee or hip, since the movement lubricates the joints and prevents stiffness.

In this kit for cyclists, you will find tools designed to optimize the start of your cycling season. Please read the following overview before viewing the detailed documents:

### PREPARING YOUR BIKE

While it's important to prepare your body at the very outset of the season, bike preparation should not be neglected. Make sure your bike is mechanically functional and safe by taking it to your favourite bike shop for a tune-up. A properly adjusted bike offers guaranteed fun!

### PROPER CYCLING POSITION

Riding an ill-fitting bike can provoke pain or discomfort. It's important to properly adjust the cleats and pedals, the saddle (height and angle), the length of your stem, and the width of your handlebars.

For tips on the right way to prepare your bike for the season ahead, please see the document titled **Fitting Your Bike**.

## DON'T DO TOO MUCH, TOO FAST

Starting the season with too long an outing for your fitness level is a bad idea! The expression “pick up where you left off” should not apply after a long winter break. Respect your muscles and joints by giving them time to rebuild their capacity to execute a training load equivalent to that of last season. For more on the subject, please view the tool entitled **Easing Your Way Into the Cycling Season**.

## WHY DO STRETCHING EXERCISES?

In all types of cycling, there are two kinds of injuries: traumatic injuries incurred during an accident or a fall, and overuse injuries. Improving your steering ability is a good way to prevent traumatic injury. That said, there's no accounting for bad luck! But injuries stemming from overuse can be prevented.

Cycling involves repetitive movement, notably flexing and extending the knees. This type of movement, done repeatedly in the same position, can lead to reduced flexibility in certain muscle groups.

For example, a loss of flexibility in the posterior muscular chain of the legs and thighs can lead to back, knee or ankle injuries.

Please view the tool entitled **Stretching Program**, which features six muscle flexibility exercises aimed at preventing overuse injuries.

## WHY DO STRENGTH-TRAINING EXERCISES?

The preferential use of certain muscles to the detriment of several others can cause the latter to weaken.

Weakness in the gluteus medius is common among cyclists, given that the seated position and the pedalling movement do little to engage that specific muscle. This weakness may be the cause of ankle, knee or back pain. Muscle function deficits can lead to decreased cycling power and predispose the cyclist to certain overuse injuries.

There is also ample proof, in the scientific literature, that a loss of strength in the stabilizer muscles of the trunk can cause back pain.

The weeks leading up to your first outings are the ideal time to strengthen the muscles that are engaged by the practice of cycling and those that are neglected by it. Building strength in your lower extremities and stability in your trunk is an undeniable advantage as you get set to start your season.

View the tool entitled **Strength-Training Program**, which features six strength-building exercises intended to prevent injury and properly prepare your body for the start of the season.

### References:

1. Kotler, D. H., Babu, A. N., & Robidoux, G. (2016). Prevention, Evaluation, and Rehabilitation of Cycling-Related Injury. *Current sports medicine reports*, 15(3), 199–206. <https://doi.org/10.1249/JSR.0000000000000262>
2. Herbert, R. D., de Noronha, M., & Kamper, S. J. (2011). Stretching to prevent or reduce muscle soreness after exercise. *The Cochrane database of systematic reviews*, (7), CD004577. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD004577.pub3>
3. OPPQ. (2022). Vélo : bien se préparer pour éviter de se blesser durant la saison. <https://oppq.qc.ca/blogue/velo-bien-se-preparer-eviter-de-se-blesser-durant-saison/>